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19 April 1966

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EST)

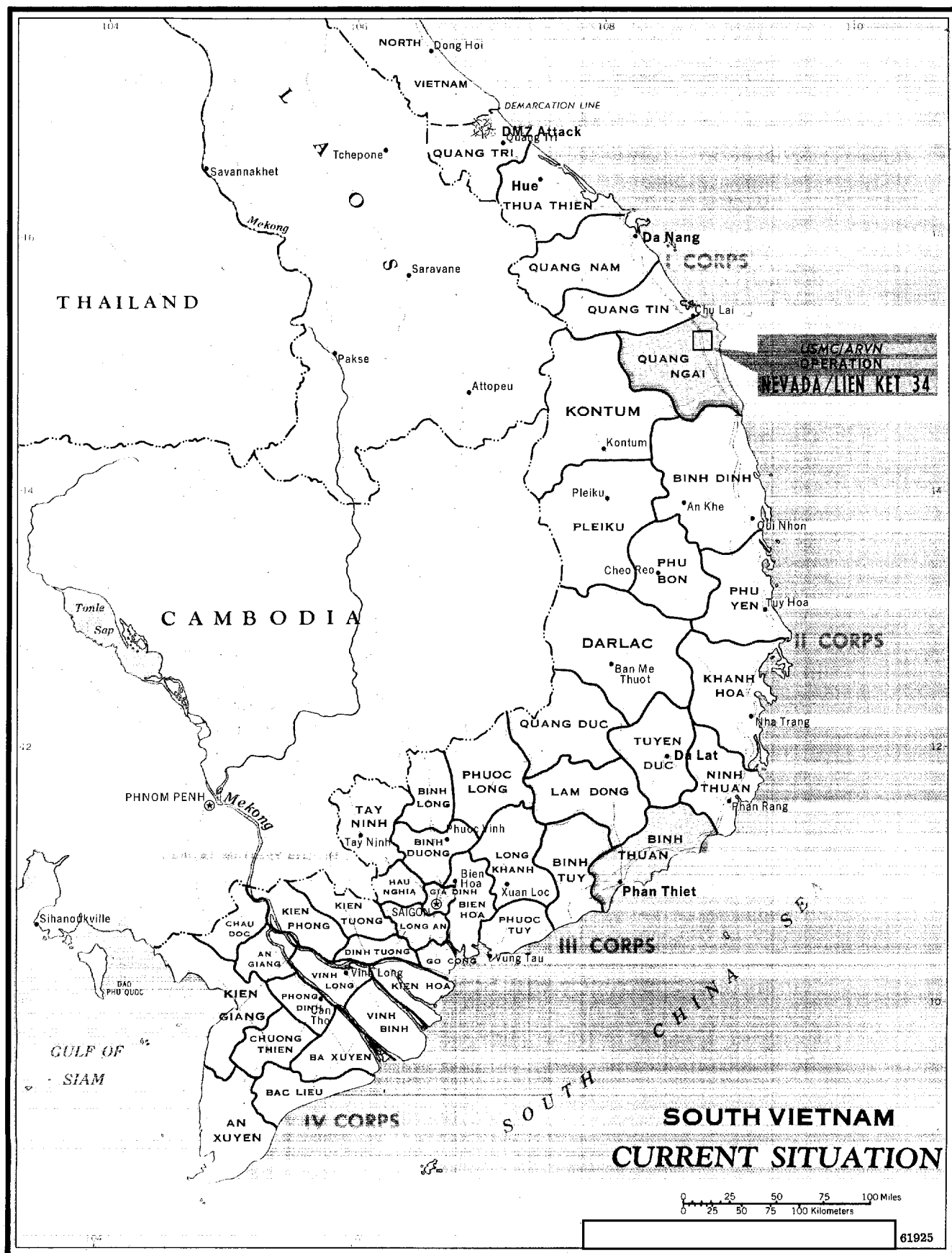
Political Developments in South Vietnam: No definitive response to monk Tri Quang's appeals for an end to demonstrations is yet evident in I Corps.

Except for the meetings held by Tri Quang, and another defensive "alert" in the city of Da Nang, the provinces of I Corps were outwardly quiet yesterday. The only reported demonstration in the country was a small antigovernment march in the town of Da Lat. The antigovernment Hue radio toned down the violence of its commentary somewhat, but the Da Nang radio kept up its usual stream of denunciations, with increasing charges of repression against Buddhists in the various provinces of I Corps.

A consular tape recording of Tri Quang's remarks in Hue and Da Nang, indicates that he promised the local populace that he would remain in I Corps until a national assembly is established, in order to be with the people if the government tries to subdue them by force. He explained that demonstrations and strikes should be halted to avoid giving the Saigon government any excuse to renege on its promise of elections in August.

The military Directorate, [with all of its generals in attendance except I Corps commander Dinh,] met yesterday in Saigon to discuss the establishment of committees to regulate and oversee the elections. [The committees apparently will be composed primarily of representatives of the civilian population, reporting to Premier Ky who is to be charged with implementing the election decree.]

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[redacted] the Directorate members voiced concern over indications of a worsening political situation in I Corps, but reached no decision on any measures to restore government authority. [redacted] there is still an evident split within the Directorate between the advocates of caution and patience and those pressing for firmer action.]

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The Military Situation in South Vietnam: The Viet Cong on 17 April launched a mortar attack against the command post of the 1st Brigade, US 101st Airborne Division, and the adjacent airstrip at Phan Thiet, the capital of coastal Binh Thuan Province. There were no American casualties, but eight US helicopters received light to moderate damage.

A Vietnamese Popular Forces platoon was ambushed last night by a Communist force of undetermined strength while on patrol in the Demilitarized Zone separating North and South Vietnam. The platoon lost 14 killed, one missing or captured, and six weapons. No US advisers were with the patrol, and there was no artillery fire. Another paramilitary platoon was sent to investigate the incident, but otherwise there are no plans for a reaction operation, such as those which in the past have provoked North Vietnamese protests of DMZ violations.

A joint search-and-destroy operation by US Marines and the South Vietnamese army, NEVADA/LIEN KET 34, has been terminated in northeast Quang Ngai Province. In five days, the operation resulted in 68 Viet Cong killed, 23 captured, 196 suspects detained, and the seizure of 16 weapons and 222 tons of rice. Allied casualties amounted to three killed and 45 wounded (14 US).

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West Germany - NATO: [Bonn apparently intends to take a firm line regarding the future of French forces in Germany after their removal from NATO assignment on 1 July.]

[In a 17 April meeting with US Special NATO Adviser McCloy, Chancellor Erhard emphatically stated German determination to take a "very clear--and if need be, hard" position with the French on this question. According to Erhard, allowing nonintegrated and uncommitted French troops to remain in Germany with undiminished status would inflict "a serious defeat" on Bonn with adverse consequences for all of Europe.]

[Erhard thought De Gaulle probably would not accept Bonn's conditions and that Germany and its allies must be prepared to face the consequences. He is concerned, however, over the degree of public support for a firm policy among the other NATO members, fearing some countries, particularly Britain, might not support a showdown with France over this issue. The Chancellor added that he thought it was important to avoid the appearance of a bilateral US-German approach.]

[De Gaulle has left the way open for negotiations with Bonn and NATO on arrangements to cover the stationing in Germany of troops not assigned to NATO. French officials, however, increasingly have emphasized a willingness to withdraw if no satisfactory arrangements can be devised]

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Sudan: [Infighting is continuing within the Sudan's generally moderate coalition regime, and a cabinet reshuffle may take place within the next week.]

[Prime Minister Muhammad Mahjoub will reportedly retain his post, while the foreign minister and several of his Umma Party colleagues probably will be replaced. The anticipated changes reflect personal rivalries within the party and are unlikely to lead to significant shifts in foreign or domestic policies.]

[The conservative Umma party, which dominates the coalition with the urban-based National Union Party, has been divided for several months over whether the ineffectual Mahjoub should continue in the job. The Umma's most powerful backer, the leader of the large Ansar religious sect, and his supporters have generally favored keeping Mahjoub, but younger and more progressive party elements have backed the youthful party president Sadiq al-Mahdi.]

[Mahjoub has recently attempted to enhance his reputation by demonstrating progress towards a political settlement of the country's southern separatist problem. The military conflict in the south is continuing, however, and there is still no evidence that an end is in sight.]

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